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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to examine children's use of social factors as bases for evaluating different patterns of code switching in dyadic social interaction. The factors were role-related and social norms, interpersonal accommodation, intergroup biases, and socio-cultural status. An initial study was conducted of monolingual and bilingual English Canadian and French Canadian senior high school students from Montreal, who were tested in classroom groups, one group per condition. Analysis of the data indicated that the basis for evaluating code switching changed both as a function of ongoing discourse and as a function of the sociocultural and role characteristics of the interactants. A second study was conducted with fifth grade French Canadian and English Canadian children. The French-speaking children had been in regular French schools, and the English-speaking children had been in early French immersion programs. A preliminary analysis of the available data indicates that generally the children's reactions appeared to be based on more concrete, immediate factors than was the case for adolescents. One prediction suggested by the available evidence is that comprehension of the social significance of language variation will precede actual use of code switching to signify attitudes, beliefs, or intentions. (AMH)

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The Social Psychological Significance of Code Switching for Children

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The motivation underlying the studies that I am going to report today derives from two somewhat independent but theoretically related topics in psychology--one is the social psychology of language, and the other is child language acquisition.

There is a growing body of theoretical and empirical work in social psychology that focuses on the role of language variation in social interaction. Social psychological interest in language as a clue to understanding processes of social interaction lies not in an investigation of the literal meanings encoded explicitly in verbal messages but rather in implicit social meanings that are attached to the way in which specific messages are conveyed in particular social situations, or what Dore has referred to as perlocutionary effects. This feature of language can be an important element in social interaction precisely because it conveys information about the interlocutors that is not readily available in the literal meaning of their message. Giles, Scherer and Taylor (1973) have conceived this information to be of two types: (1) that related to the biological, social and psychological state of the speaker (such as age, socioeconomic status and mood, res-

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pectively); and (2) that related to the speaker's attitudes, beliefs, group affiliations, and even his/her reactions to the interaction itself. Information concerning biological, social and psychological states can be and, in fact, is often conveyed explicitly by other, equally potent nonlinguistic cues (e.g., information concerning one's age may be available from one's physical appearance). It is information concerning attitudes, beliefs, etc., that is of particular interest to the social psychologist since it is often implicit and unique since it is not or cannot be conveyed in other ways.

Language variation that conveys socially relevant information can occur at a number of different levels, either singly or in combination--the phonological (Labov, 1966), the lexical (Ervin-Tripp, 1972), the syntactic (Brown & Levinson 1978), or the dialectal (Blom & Gumperz, 1972). Bilingualism provides a particularly striking example of language variation with significant social psychological implications since it entails language switches that are easily recognized by others, and since group affiliations and/or attitudinal and belief systems that are associated with the respective languages are also easily identified. Indeed, research findings using the matched-guise technique, developed by Lambert at McGill (see, for example, Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner & Fillenbaum, 1960), in which the true ethnolinguistic identity of the speaker is

unknown, have demonstrated that the same balanced bilingual speakers will be perceived more favourably when heard using their more socially prestigious language; this is true in the case of evaluative dimensions concerning the speaker's social status and competence. Other studies have found that use of the less prestigious language may invoke more favourable perceptions with regard to personal integrity and social attractiveness (Bouchard-Ryan, 1979). It follows quite clearly that such differences in person perception could influence social interaction substantially.

Language may vary in different situations or in the same situation--Blom and Gumperz have referred to these as situational and conversational switching, respectively. Use of more than one language variety in the same or different situations is usually referred to as bilingual code switching, and it is this type of language variation that was investigated in the studies that I will describe shortly.

Theoretical explanations of code switching, and more general language variation, have focused on a number of distinct features of social interaction. These include social norms, interpersonal accommodation, sociocultural status and intergroup relations. Sociolinguistic conceptions of code switching have tended to emphasize characteristics of the interactants, such as their age or social status, and of the setting in which interaction takes place, such as its for-

mality/informality and/or its public/private nature (Fishman, 1972; Hymes, 1972). According to this approach, selection of languages or language varieties is prescribed largely by social norms. Social psychological conceptions of code switching have highlighted interpersonal and intergroup aspects of social interactions. According to the interpersonal approach, a speaker's use of the same language or language variety as his/her interlocutor may be motivated by the speaker's desire to increase interpersonal interaction or cooperation by increasing mutual similarity (Giles, Taylor, & Bourhis, 1973). Use of different language varieties is conceived to have the opposite intention, i.e., to reduce interaction and cooperation. Viewed in terms of intergroup processes, use of a language variety that is different than that of one's interlocutor is viewed as a linguistic device to distinguish oneself ethnolinguistically from the other or to establish one's identity with a particular social group (Bourhis, Giles, Leyens, & Tajfel, 1979).

Most existing theoretical and empirical work on the social psychology of language variation in social interaction has been limited by an overattention to single classes of social variables to describe the effects of code switching and by an overuse of single processes to explain these effects. While univariate studies may be experimentally convenient and conceptually neat, they are likely to be misleading since the social psychological significance of particular instances of

code switching in a given situation is likely to be ambiguous unless consideration is given to multiple determining factors. I will return to this point later when I describe the design of my own research.

It is being increasingly recognized among child language researchers that a comprehensive theory of child language acquisition will have to account for the child's ability to use and understand language appropriately in actual social interactions in addition to describing his/her competence with formal linguistic structures. Appropriate use of language, as the adult literature illustrates, necessarily comprises an understanding of the social meanings, including beliefs, attitudes and intentions, that are implicitly conveyed by language variation. Studies of language acquisition in children such as that by Shatz and Gelman (1972) with monolingual children and Poplack (1979) and Genishi (1976) with bilingual children have demonstrated young children's ability to change their speech styles and to code switch appropriately in the presence of interlocutors who are linguistically immature or incompetent. As well, research by Lambert(1967), Rosenthal (1974) and Day (1980) demonstrates that children acquire stereotyped attitudes toward language as early as age 6, and perhaps even younger. However, to date there has been no research on the social psychological interpretations that children make when different speech styles or language

varieties are used in face-to-face interaction.

As a first step in examining this issue, research was undertaken with adolescent subjects in order to provide baseline data against which to compare the results from children and to test out a new experimental paradigm. I will describe this research in some detail because it is pertinent to the children's study that I will discuss afterwards.

In contrast to other techniques which have been used to examine bilingual code switching, the technique that was used consisted of extended dialogues made up of four speech acts, two by each interlocutor. The dialogues were experimentally segmented so that each speech act was heard separately and before subsequent acts. The subjects gave their impressions of the speakers after each speech event using 9 cm. long rating scales. The scales pertained to (1) the speakers' personal traits (friendly, considerate, intelligent, competent), (2) their interpersonal reactions (e.g., salesman likes/respects customer), and (3) their situational reactions (e.g., customer feels comfortable, insulted). Extended dialogues were used in order to simulate natural interactions as much as possible; and interrupting the dialogue after each speech act to solicit reactions allowed us to isolate the precise context of the subjects' impressions, and to monitor changes in impressions as the dialogue continued.

The stimulus speakers were depicted in the roles of a salesman and a customer and were played by English Canadian

(EC) and French Canadian (FC) male actors, both of whom were bilingual. In Study 1, the salesman was represented by the FC actor and the customer by the EC actor; their roles were reversed in Study 2. The conversational sequence was always salesman - customer - salesman - customer. There were four different sequences of code switching as summarized on page 1 of the handout. The salesman's opening remarks were always in his native language so that in Study 1 this was French and in Study 2 it was English. This served to establish the salesman's ethnic identity in each study. Although the customer's reply to the salesman in Act 2 was in his native language for half of the conditions and in his second language for half, his ethnic identity was always evident because of this accent in the second language conditions.

The subjects were monolingual and bilingual English Canadian and French Canadian senior high school students from Montreal. They were tested in classroom groups, one group per condition. Use of this situation and these subject groups permitted investigation of multiple factors as possible determinants of the social psychological significance of the different code switching sequences. The factors that were examined were 1) interpersonal language accommodation, 2) social norms related to the salesman-customer relationship, 3) intergroup effects and, in particular, the tendency for members of one ethnolinguistic group to prefer members of

their own group over out group members, and 4) sociocultural factors whereby individuals tend to favour high prestige languages over low prestige languages.

Expectations based on interpersonal language accommodation would predict favourable reactions from the subjects whenever convergence between the two interlocutors occurred, irrespective of other variables, such as the speaker's role or his sociocultural status. Predictions based on role-related social norms are different for each role person. In particular, the salesman should be favoured if he converges to the customer and disfavoured if he does not; the customer, on the other hand, would be expected to be viewed the same whether he used English or French (Scotton, 1979). Intergroup factors would predict that each subject group would favour the ingroup speaker, regardless of the language he spoke, and convergence toward the ingroup language (Tajfel, 1978), i.e., the French-speaking subjects would favour the French actor and the use of French, and the English subjects the English actor and the use of English. Finally, sociocultural factors would predict that the high prestige language, English in this setting (d'Anglejan & Tucker, 1973), would be favoured by both subject groups. While the effects of each factor have been considered separately, in fact, it was expected that a combination of factors would influence the outcomes.

The results were as follows. There was evidence that the subjects' perceptions of the customer and the salesman were initially based primarily on the social norms related to the salesman-customer relationship. Specifically, in Act 2 the customer was evaluated the same whether he used French or English in respons to the salesman, whereas in Act 3 the salesman was evaluated negatively when he failed to reply the customer in his native language.

The importance of the social norm as a basis for evaluating the speakers' language choices depended upon the sociocultural status of the role persons. This was particularly true in the case of the customer. Whereas the customer in Study 1 was evaluated similarly irrespective of his language of response, which as has already been pointed out is in accord with the social norm, the customer in Study 2 was evaluated more positively when he used English than when he used French. My interpretation of these results is that the prestigious sociocultural status of the English Canadian customer in Study 1 reinforced his role-related language privileges. On the other hand, the relatively low sociocultural prestige of the French Canadian customer in Study 2 vitiated his role-related language options. The salesman's response to the customer was evaluated similarly in both studies, and in accord with the social norm, possibly because expectations concerning appropriate language behavior for this role are

too well defined and accepted to be influenced by socio-cultural effects.

By the end of the dialogue, there was evidence of a shift away from the social norm as a basis for evaluating the speakers' language choices. At this time, perception of the speaker was based primarily on interpersonal accommodation. Specifically, in Act 4 the customer was perceived more positively when he used the salesman's native language, i.e., converged, than when he used his own native language. The effect of the shift was more evident in conditions where the salesman and customer had not demonstrated language convergence toward one another in previous speech acts and was less evident in conditions where they had. In other words, early interaction patterns influenced later ones.

Intergroup effects in the form of ingroup bias were evident in the subjects' reactions throughout the discourse. In Act 1 the FC subjects rated the salesman significantly more positively than did the EC subjects and in Act 2 the EC subjects rated the EC customer significantly more positively than did the FC subjects, regardless of his language choice.

Thus, it is evident from even a brief summary of these results that code switching in social interaction has significant and complex social psychological effects. It was apparent that the basis for evaluating code switching in these studies changed both as a function of the sociocultural

and role characteristics of the interactants and as a function of ongoing discourse. No single variable would be adequate to fully account for the outcomes.

The developmental aspects of these findings were investigated by using an adapted form of the segmented dialogue technique with 11 year old children. The primary modification made in the technique involved providing each child with a pictorial representation, in the form of a cartoon, of the events depicted by the audio tape. To facilitate the children's comprehension of the interaction, the entire four frame sequence of cartoon pictures was presented in chronological order on a separate page. As well, each frame was presented at the top of the questionnaire page corresponding to the cartoon. The same types of rating scales were used with the children as had been used with the adolescents, but fewer questions were asked and the wording of the questions was adjusted to be age appropriate.

The subjects were grade 5 French Canadian and English Canadian children--the FC children had been in regular French schools and had had one year of ESL instruction in grade 5; the EC children had been in early French immersion programs in which all curriculum instruction in kindergarten to grade 2 had been taught in French; this was followed by 90% French instruction in grade 3, 60% in grade 4, and 40% in grade 5. The children were tested in class groups, one group per condition (see page of handout). The procedure was otherwise the same--that is,

the children heard each speech act separately and then immediately gave their impressions of the speaker.

To recapitulate, the purpose of the study was to examine children's use of different social factors as bases for evaluating different patterns of code switching in dyadic social interaction. The factors were role-related social norms, interpersonal accommodation, intergroup biases and sociocultural status. Data from both English Canadian and French Canadian subjects are available only for the Study 1 conditions--that is with the salesman depicted by a French Canadian and the customer by an English Canadian. Rather than presenting an exhaustive summary of the results, I will discuss selected findings and compare them to the adolescent results. The main findings are summarized in the handout.

There were important similarities and important differences in the children's and adolescents' responses. Their responses were similar in that the impressions of both types of subjects were multiply determined. As with the adolescents, the children's impressions of the speakers, or at least the salesman, were influenced by role-related social norms. It is evident from Figure 3 that both the EC and FC children downgraded the salesman significantly from Act 1 to Act 3 when he violated the social norm by not using the customer's native language--this occurred on five of the six trait scales. Also in accord with the social norm (see Figure 5), both groups of children

thought that the EC customer was happier, more comfortable, and less insulted when he received a reply in English from the salesman than when he received a reply in French. These latter results could also be interpreted in terms of interpersonal accommodation. Contrary to these findings, Genishi (1976) found no evidence of code switching according to social roles among four 6 year old bilingual children whom she studied using observational techniques. Notwithstanding the fact that Genishi's subjects were very young, her failure to observe code switching according to social role may lie with the roles that she examined, namely that of mother, father and child--these roles may not be associated with particular code switching behaviours. Even in the present study, the children demonstrated knowledge of appropriate code switching only in the case of the more clearly defined of the two roles, that is, the salesman--the children did not appear to interpret the customer's code switching in terms of his role.

There was also evidence that interpersonal language accommodation figured in the children's interpretations of the speaker's language choices. From Figure 4, it is evident that both subject groups thought that the EC customer who replied in the salesman's native language, French, respected him significantly more than did the customer who replied in his own native language, English. At the same time, it is also evident in Figure 4 that the children thought that the FC

salesman who replied in the customer's native language, English, respected him significantly more than did the salesman who replied in his own native language, French. Related to these effects is the finding, illustrated in Figure 6, that the customer who replied in English in Act 4 was perceived to like and respect the EC salesman significantly more in Act 4 than in Act 2 if the salesman had also previously used English. However, the customer who persisted in using English in response to an FC salesman who used French was perceived to like him significantly less.

In addition to indicating the significance of interpersonal accommodation in the children's evaluation of code switching, the latter response pattern also indicates that the children's reactions to given speech acts were influenced by preceding speech acts and were not based exclusively on immediate language behaviours. Similar conversational effects had been found in the adolescents' responses.

Genishi (1976), however, concluded on the basis of her observational study and on the basis of work by Shultz (1975) and Greenlee (1971) that there was no evidence that children under 8 years of age had specific rules for conversational switching. It may be that although young children do not use conversational switches in their own speech with others, they nevertheless understand the social psychological significance of certain types of conversational switches. As in other

aspects of language acquisition, comprehension may precede production. Todate studies of code switching in children have focused only on production.

A third basis of impression formation that was evident in the children's responses can be characterized as self-serving. This is illustrated in Figures 1 and 2. It was found in Act 1 that the FC children rated the FC salesman significantly more favourably than did the EC children on five of the six trait scales and they indicated a greater desire to be served by him. Upon first examination these results might be interpreted to reflect ingroup bias. However, examination of the children's responses to Act 2, which are illustrated in Figure 2, suggests that they were actually reacting to the language used by the speaker rather than to his group membership. In Act 2, the FC children rated the customer more favourably when he replied in French whereas the EC children rated him more favourably when he replied in English. Thus, the children's evaluations favoured the speaker who used their (i.e., the children's) native language. In contrast, the adolescents' evaluations favoured speakers from the ingroup, irrespective of the language he used in any particular act.

In general, the children's reactions appeared to be based on more concrete, immediate factors than was the case for the adolescents. This was particularly evident in their self-

serving biases which as we have just seen were based on the speaker's explicit language choices. Self-serving biases were not found in the adolescent studies. Two additional bases for social evaluation that were evident in the adolescents' reactions but not in the children's were group membership, that is, the ingroup-outgroup status of the speaker, and sociocultural status.

Genishi (1976) and Shultz (1975) have also reported that young bilingual children do not code switch to mark ethnic contrasts. Use of group membership and sociocultural variables in social evaluation is predicated on the child's development of a sense of ethnolinguistic identity that contrasts ingroup and outgroup members and upon an internalization of socially shared stereotypes pertaining to the relative status of each group and its language. Manifestation of ingroup and sociocultural bias in social evaluations depends in turn upon the application of conceptions of oneself and others to particular encounters. While the children in the present study may have acquired an ethnolinguistic identity and related sociocultural stereotypes, these may not have been expressed in their social evaluations because they were bound to react to more explicit features of the social interaction, such as the actual languages being spoken. Accordingly, the emergence of ingroup and sociocultural biases as significant bases of person perception would be expected to occur only when the children can

go beyond the immediate social situation. The present results suggest that this does not occur until after 11 years of age. It would be important, however, to examine code switching in different types of social situations, particularly those involving conflict or disagreement, in order to establish unequivocally the age at which children use code switching for marking ethnic group differences.

In summary, the social psychology of language variation for children may be conceived to comprise multiple determining factors. The factors vary in the extent to which they are based on immediately perceptible self-referenced features of social interaction or, conversely, to the extent that they are based on abstract, socially-referenced features. These diverse factors acquire significance in the developing child's use and interpretation of language variation in dyadic interactions in an ordered fashion, with the more concrete, self-referenced ones being acquired earlier than the more abstract, socially-referenced ones. A schematic representation of this developmental sequence is illustrated in Figure 7. While a tentative order of factor acquisition has been suggested on the bases of the existing data, this remains subject to further empirical investigation. The available evidence also suggests that older children use more factors when interpreting code switching than do young children. Furthermore, as the social significance of more abstract factors is acquired, less abstract

factors, such as the strictly self-referenced ones, may drop out of use. It would also be predicted that comprehension of the social psychological significance of language variation will precede actual use of code switching to signify attitudes, beliefs or intentions. It also seems likely that the significance of different bases for interpreting code switching will depend upon characteristics of the situation in which it occurs, in addition to the child's age. Thus, a range of social situations should be explored.

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Footnotes

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The Social Psychological Significance of
Code Switching for Children

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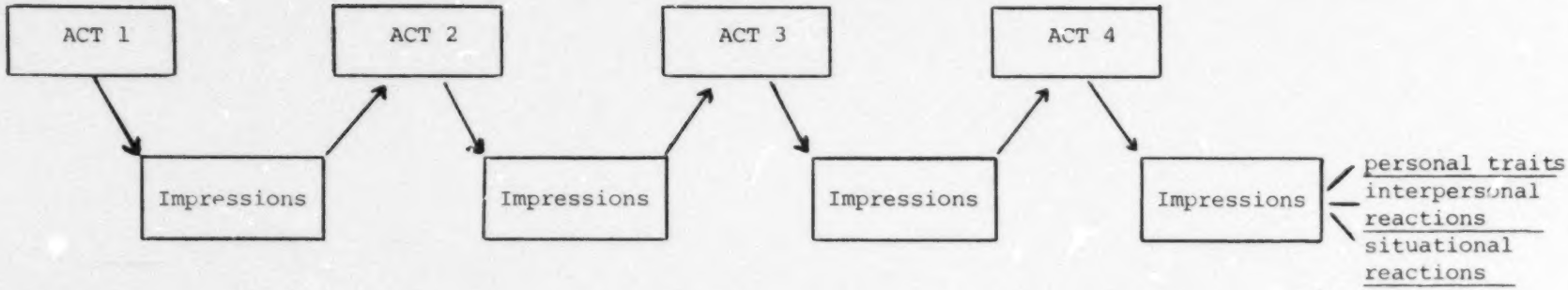
A. PARADIGM



B. ADOLESCENT STUDIES

STUDY 1

	FC* Salesman Act 1	EC* Customer Act 2	FC Salesman Act 3	EC Customer Act 4
1.	Fr	Eng	Fr	Eng
2.	Fr	Eng	Fr	Fr
3.	Fr	Fr	Eng	Eng
4.	Fr	Fr	Eng	Fr

STUDY 2

	EC Salesman Act 1	FC Customer Act 2	EC Salesman Act 3	FC Customer Act 4
1.	Eng	Fr	Eng	Fr
2.	Eng	Fr	Eng	Eng
3.	Eng	Eng	Fr	Eng
4.	Eng	Eng	Fr	Fr

*FC = French Canadian; *EC = English Canadian; Fr = French Language; Eng = English Language

C. CHILDREN STUDY (11 yr olds;English Canadian/French Canadian)

1) Conditions:

	FC Salesman Act 1 →	EC Customer Act 2 →	FC Salesman Act 3 →	EC Customer Act 4
1.	Fr	Eng	Eng	Eng
2.	Fr	Eng	Fr	Eng
3.	Fr	Fr	Eng	Fr
4.	Fr	Fr	Fr	Fr

FIGURE 1 - ACT 1

Children's Impressions of FC Salesman

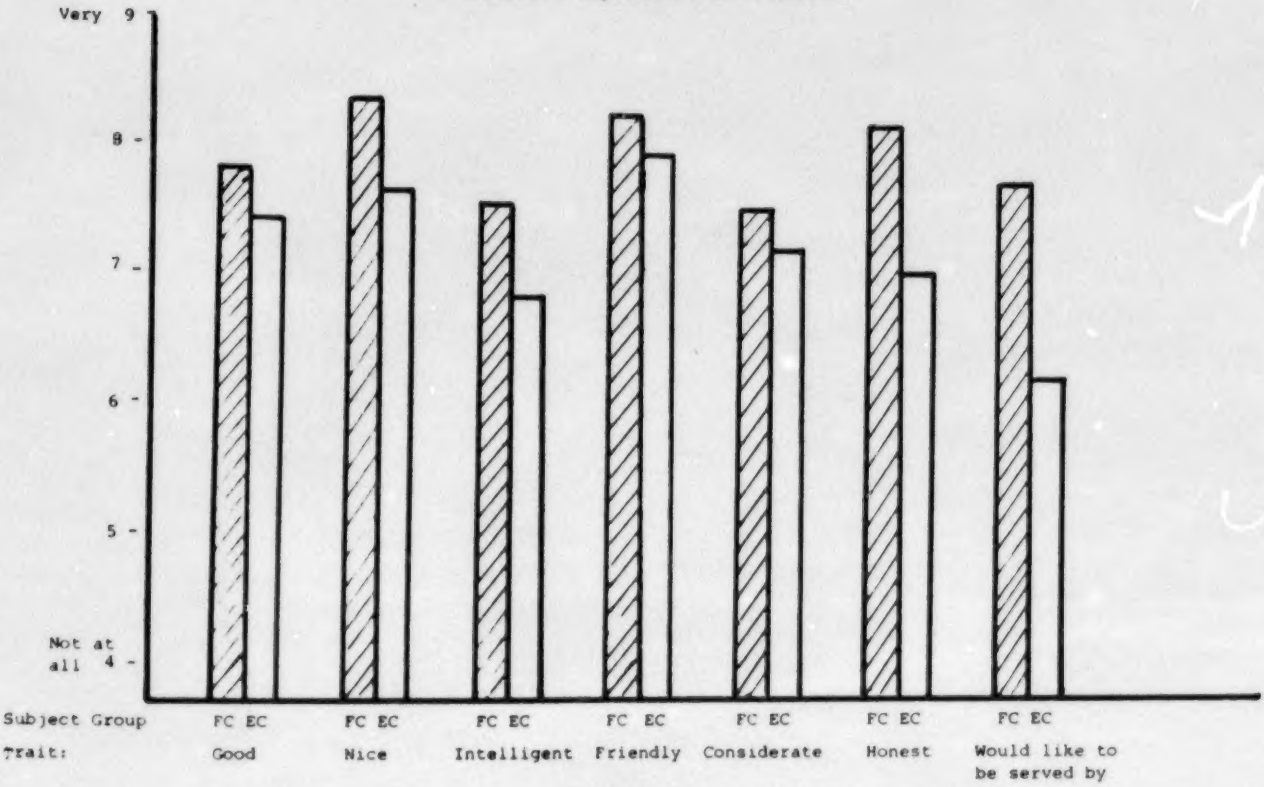


FIGURE 2 - ACT 2

Children's Impressions of English Canadian Customer

as a Function of His Language of Response

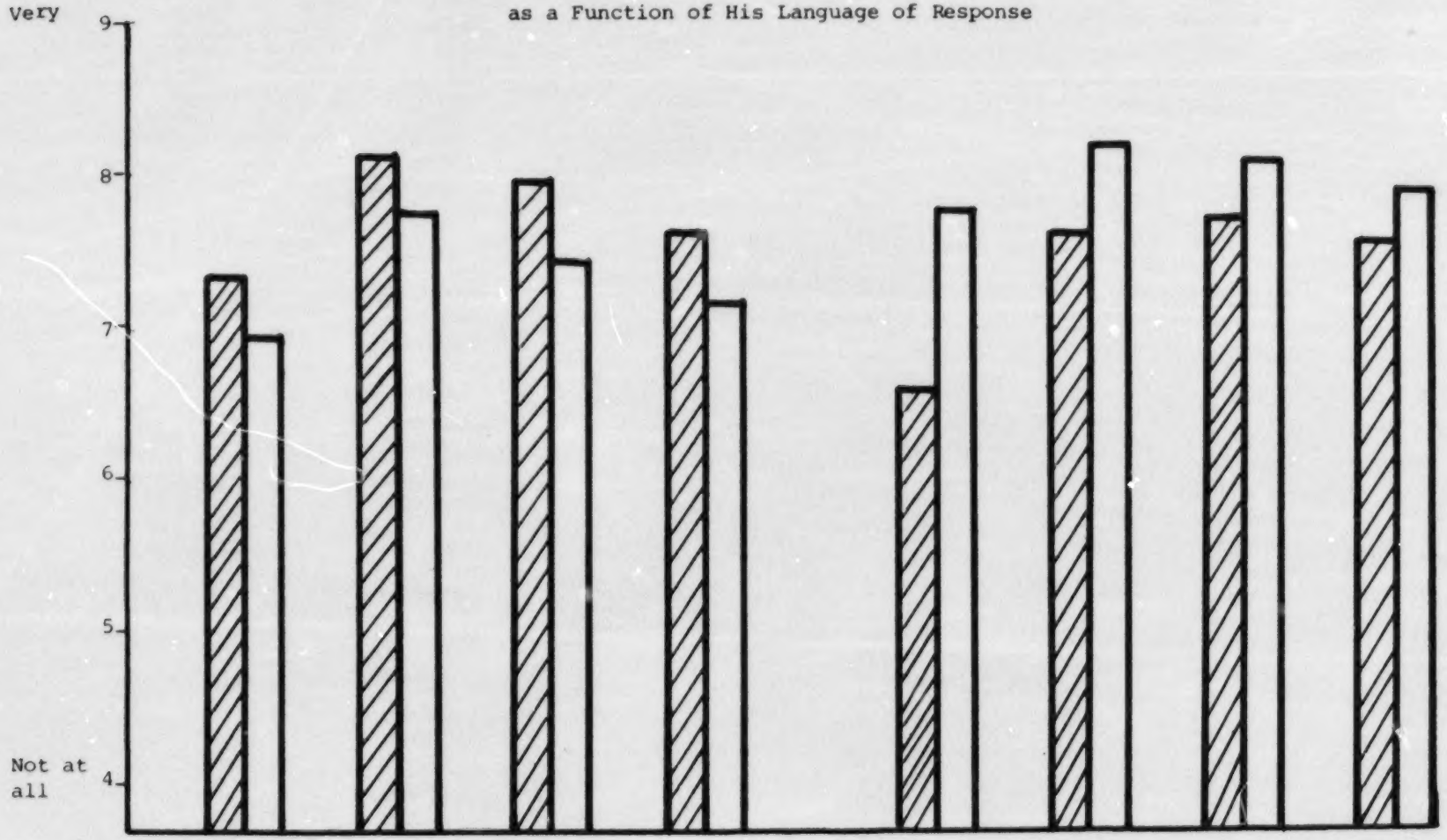
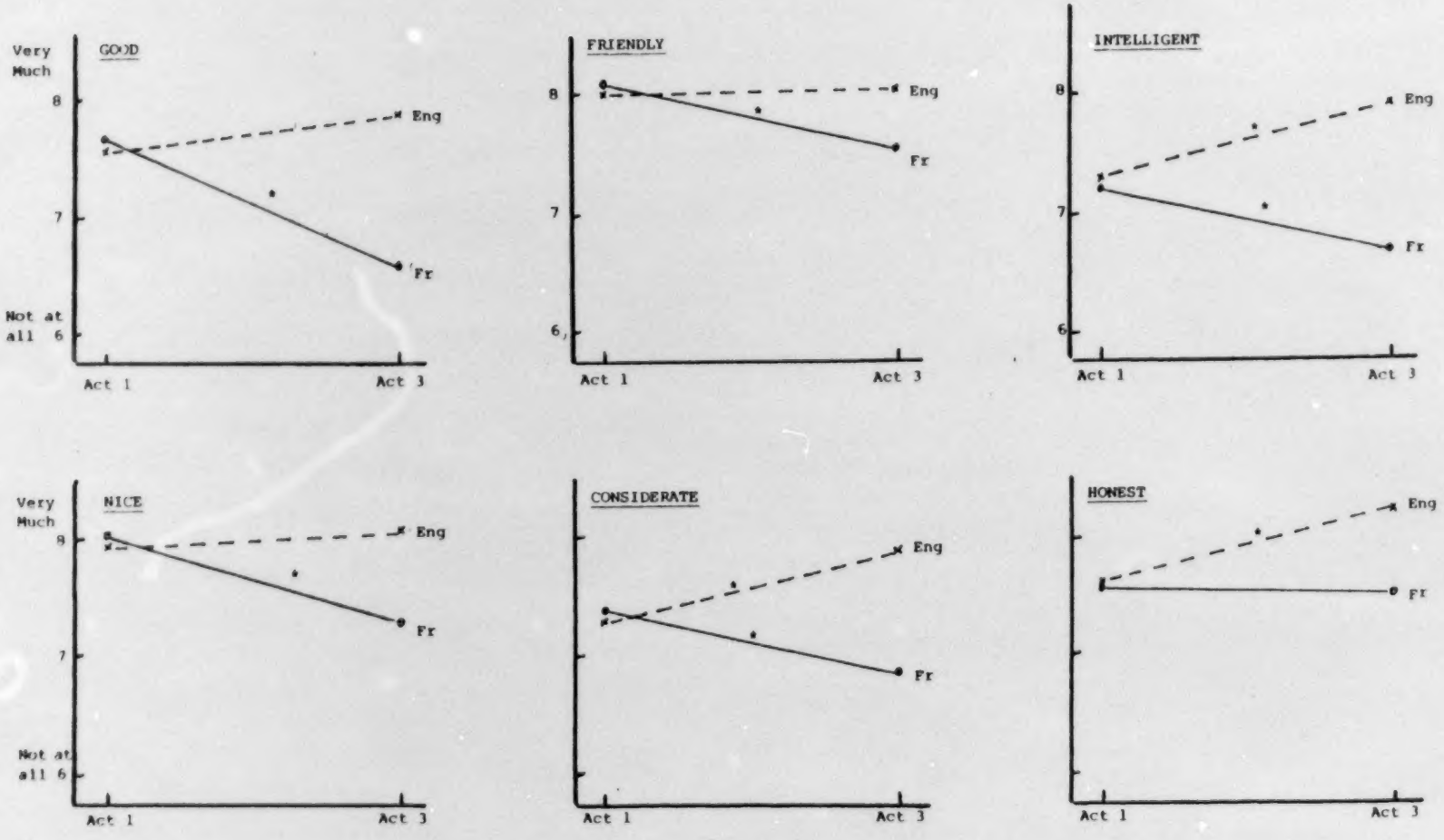

Very
9
8
7
6
5
Not at all
4
Language of Response: F E F E F E F E F E F E F E F E
Trait: Good Nice Friendly Considerate Good Nice Friendly Considerate
Subject Group: FRENCH CANADIAN ENGLISH CANADIAN

FIGURE 3

Children's Impressions of Salesman as a Function of His Language of Response in Act 3



* $p < .05$

---------- Salesman responded in English

_____ Salesman responded in French

FIGURE 4

a) Children's Ratings of Interpersonal Respect as a Function of Language

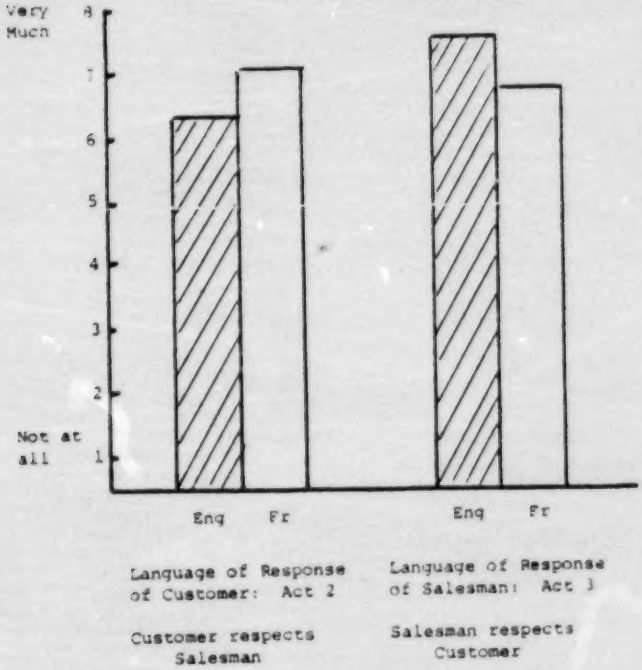


FIGURE 5

Impressions of Customer's Feelings as a Function of the Salesman's Language of Response in Act 3

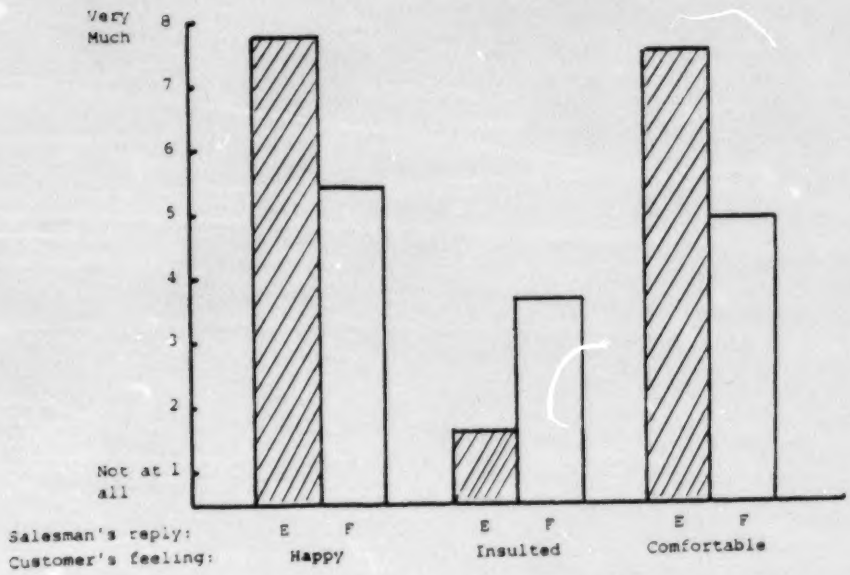
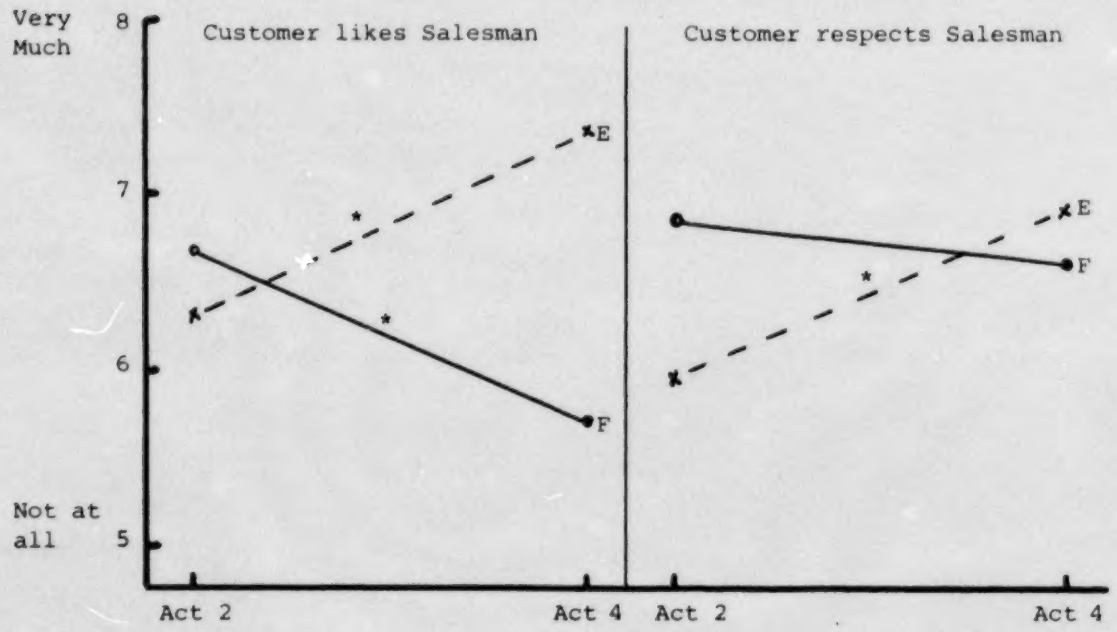
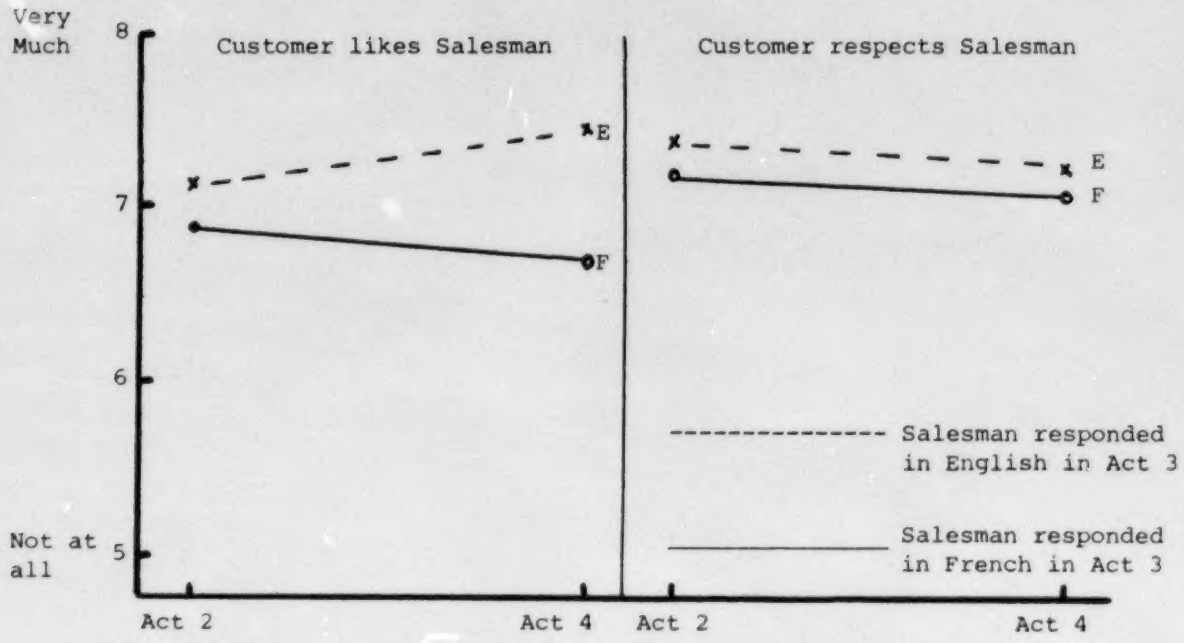


FIGURE 6
Impressions of Interpersonal Respect and Liking
as a Function of Customer's and Salesman's Language of Response



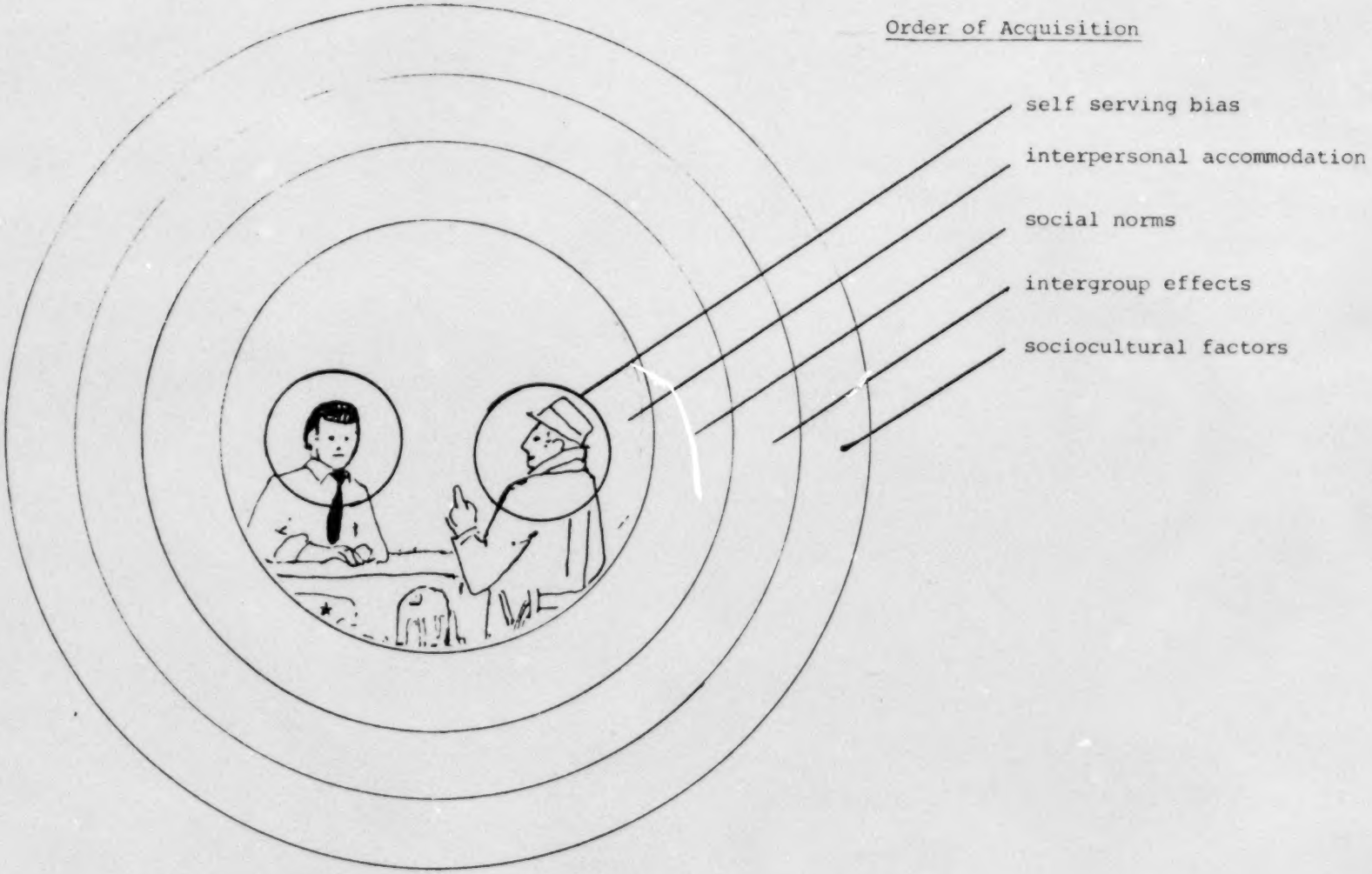
Customer replied in English in Act 4



Customer replied in French in Act 4

*p < .05

FIGURE 7



Schematic Representation of the Development of the Social Psychological Significance of Code Switching in Children